

STATINTL

ON THE RIGHT:

Senator Fulbright And Us Plain Folks

By WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

SENATOR William Fulbright, in trying to make the point that private individuals, and agencies, sometimes get in the way of "official" foreign policy, has classified the Young Americans for Freedom as an "extremist political organization." It is of course useful in polemics to pronounce the other side as "extremist," and anyone who has closely studied the career of Mr. Fulbright is aware that he is regularly given to abusive language to describe people and positions with which he disagrees.

The Senator's most recent complaint concerns the cancellation by the Firestone Tire Co. of the deal with Romania to build there a synthetic rubber plant worth about \$40 million. The Young Americans for Freedom acted on the assumption that surely if it is laudable to picket Woolworth's in Alabama for declining to serve hot dogs to human beings merely because they are Negro, it is laudable to picket commerce with a government that declines to let human beings out of jail merely because they believe in freedom.

Anyway, the pressure of YAF combined with opportunistic pressures by Firestone's competitor, the Goodyear Company, caused Firestone to back out of the deal: and Romania and Fulbright are furious.

Fulbright's larger point—that individual agencies shouldn't get in the way of American foreign policy—is not uninteresting, although it tends surely to reflect the latently totalitarian instincts of those



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who denounce in such immoderate language others who disagree with him. Until the day comes when the government of the United States owns all the corporations in America, it is the corporations' business, not the government's, whether to trade with any other nation in the world.

True, as a matter of national policy the government may clap an embargo: that is an exercise of a negative power relating to the national security. But to do the opposite, to require a corporation to trade with a foreign power, whether that power is friendly or unfriendly, is outside the sovereign authority of free governments. The government may not require a corporation to ship a single stick of chewing gum against its will.

The Young Americans for Freedom was organized in 1960 as the conservative counterpart to the Students for Democratic Action. Their publication, *The New Guard*, is carefully edited and highly responsible, and publishes the work of students and scholars from around the country. Dozens of Congressmen and Senators and professors are associated with its advisory board. All in all, about as "extremist" an organization as the Chamber of Commerce. Partisan yes, extremist no.

It is a source of exasperation to some of our internationalists that there should continue to reside deep in the American conscience a sense of the moral unfitness of normal commercial, and even diplomatic exchanges with governments which flout the elementary laws of civilization, and on top of that, seek to turn every exchange with the West into a means by which to increase their relative power over us, advancing, hopefully, on the day when they will, in the delicate phrase of Khrushchev, "bury us."

For Fulbright these are sentiments to be mocked. Goodyear, he wrote, anticipating Firestone's difficulties, "suddenly got religion and grandly refused to traffic with the Red heathen." I do not know, not being Goodyear's confessor, just how suddenly it got religion. But is the term "Red heathen" only suitable for use by the college of the Ozarks?

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